



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit
Camp Shelby, Mississippi

Date: 04 August 2015

Time: 0900 – 1500 CST

Locations: Camp Shelby, MS: Auxiliary Field One Assault Landing Strip, 155th ABCT field command post, and Multi-purpose Range Complex Tower

Format: Discussion with governor, US congressmen, commanders and staffs

Attendees:

Commissioner Thomas Lamont
Executive Director Raymond Carpenter
LTC Vincent NCFA Staff
LTC Stevenson NCFA Staff
Mr. Johnny Thomas NCFA Staff
Ms. Cherie Emerson NCFA Staff
Mr. Anthony Boyda NCFA Staff
LTC Michael Lockwood, Assistant Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)
Governor Phil Bryant
US Congressman Trent Kelly
MG Augustus Collins, Adjutant General, Mississippi National Guard
BG Jessie Robinson, ATAG, MS ARNG
BG Allen Brewer, Director, Joint Staff, MS ARNG
COL Amos Parker, Commander, 154th Regional Training Institute, MS ARNG
COL Jeff Van, Commander, 155th ABCT, MS ARNG
COL Greg Michel, Installation Commander, Camp Shelby, MS
COL Dane Powell, State Aviation Safety Officer, MS ARNG
COL Matthew VanWegener, Commander, 3rd BCT, 1st CAV DIV
COL Brandon Robins, Commander, 177th AR Bde, First Army
COL Amos Parker, G3, MS ARNG
LTC James Haynie, Commander, 1-185th Apache Battalion
Lt Gen Joseph Lengyel, Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau
Maj Gen William Hill, Assistant Adjutant General-Air, MS NG
BG Wendul Hagler, Special Assistant to the Director ARNG
Mr. Dave Norton, Exercise Director, Exportable Combat Training Center

Documents Submitted to Commission: (1) "Train in the Magnolia State" (quad-fold handout), (2) "Shoulder to Shoulder" (Mississippi National Guard booklet), (3) 155th

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ABCT Organization and Training Brief, and (4) A/1-185 ARB Operational Readiness
Rate (APR 14 – MAY 15)

Meeting Summary

The meeting convened at 0907hrs with Commissioner Lamont, NCFA Staff members, Governor Bryant, Congressman Kelly, LTG Lengyel, MG Collins, and members of the MS ARNG. Commissioner Lamont and LTC Lockwood discussed the purpose of the commission and the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) to the discussions for the entire day.

MG Collins, The Adjutant General for the Mississippi National Guard, provided the opening statement and briefly talked about Camp Shelby consisting of 134,000 acres and provides training opportunities for civilian agencies and the Joint Force to include Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. He explained the metrics that drive force structure reduction lists must consider unit redeployment dates and timing for mandated “C5” Unit Status Report reporting (C5 takes a given unit out of the readiness cycle). The example used had all the units in the 155th ABCT reported as C5 for two years following reset due to M1A2 SEP fielding. The 155th ABCT is the most modern ABCT in the ARNG, yet was listed below the cut line if the ARNG must reduce ABCT’s according to NGB reduction methodology.

MG Collins then explained how the loss of Apache’s would directly impact MS. The Apache unit is stationed in a brand new Army Aviation Support Facility in Tupelo. Because the facility is new MILCON, the facility cannot be closed. MS would be forced to move either Chinooks or Blackhawks to that facility causing turbulence to the personnel in terms of pilot and maintainer training and stationing. MS will not receive any additional UH-60 airframes under Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), which means personnel will be laid off. MG Collins reiterated that the Army should not have a capability in Compo 1 (Regular Army) that is not replicated in the Reserve Components. MG Collins then introduced Governor Phil Bryant.

Governor Bryant briefly discussed the history of Camp Shelby as established before WWI, and Camp Shelby’s success as consistently providing a quality training venue to the military ever since. He discussed the pride that not only he, but all Mississippians share for their citizens’ service in the ARNG, and the fact that MS has two US Congressmen currently serving in the MS ARNG. He shared his pride for the many industries that have made MS their home to include Toyota and Nissan plants, ship building, and Raytheon. He noted that MS State University is the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle/System (UAV/UAS) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) center of excellence paired with Camp Shelby as the military’s UAV/UAS test site. Governor Bryant explained that the day of the NCFA’s visit to MS also coincided with primary election day in MS, and he chose to spend the morning with the NCFA much to the dismay of his staff. He then introduced Congressman Trent Kelly.

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Congressman Kelly began his statement saying that the National Guard is capable of full spectrum operations pointing to his service with the 155th ABCT in Iraq. The men and women of MS take their service to the nation very seriously and train very hard to be able to perform, and their citizens “love their Army National Guard!” He stated that when assessing the ARNG units to determine who to cut, the units should be judged by their past performance during deployments and the history of that unit. Congressman Kelly explained the MS ARNG response and support to civil authorities stating that MS didn’t request additional support from outside the state to deal with the effects of Hurricane Katrina. The reason is because men and women of the MS National Guard are from here, they train for disasters with emergency responders annually before the emergency happens, and they bring the human element of community, care, and compassion. They were able to meet the needs of their citizens because of these relationships built prior to the response.¹

The session concluded at 1050hrs with Commissioner Lamont thanking Governor Bryant, Congressman Kelly, and MG Collins for taking the time to meet with the NCFA. COL Parker, MS ARNG G3, then provided instruction to the group for aircraft assignments.

Commissioner Lamont, the NCFA staff, Governor Bryant, Congressman Kelly, and the rest of the MS ARNG contingent boarded UH-60s at 1100hrs for an aerial tour of Camp Shelby and arrived at the 155th ABCT tactical operations center (TOC), located in the vicinity of the Urban Operations Training Village, at 1130hrs. The MS ARNG provided vans for the short ride from the landing zone to the TOC.

The next discussion with COL Jeff Van, Commander of the 155th ABCT, started at 1145hrs. Commissioner Lamont and LTC Lockwood, ADFO, went over the purpose of the commission and FACA requirements.

COL Van began by providing an overview of his training plan that includes multi-echelon operations during XCTC² focused on assessments of platoon maneuver, but training at every level of every organization participating. MS ARNG approach towards participating support units is “tell us your training objectives and we will build scenarios to meet your needs.” COL Van noted there were 4,600 Soldiers currently in the training area from all 3 components of the Army, some Marines and even Air Force F-16’s. The direct support Artillery will conduct live fire through table 16, and tanks will conduct live fire through table 12. The four-week exercise includes two weeks targeted for maneuver in the middle staggering the dates for maneuver battalions to maximize training effects and space. All training is part of an overall brigade unified friendly and

¹ While not as significant as the support provided in Louisiana for recovery operations following Hurricane Katrina, Regular Army and other States’ National Guard provided support in Mississippi. *Army Support During the Hurricane Katrina Disaster, The Long War Series Occasional Paper 29*, Combat Studies Institute, James A. Wombwell,

² The Army National Guard’s eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) program is an instrumented Brigade field training exercise designed to certify Platoon proficiency in coordination with First Army.

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enemy common operating picture. This exercise integrates F-16's, Apaches, Shadow, Ravens, mortars, and artillery in combined arms training during this annual training period.

Next year, the 36th DIV will host the 155th ABCT and the 45th IBC as they conduct company-level training at Ft. Hood, TX. The driving factor for training this year is the 155th ABCT National Training Center (NTC) rotation in Training Year (TY) 17. The value of XCTC is that it brings many capabilities to a single training event, and allows resolution of many issues prior to a rotation at NTC, such as multi-compo communications. COL Van recommended that there should be regional collective training workshops where all components of the Army are made aware of collective training events so that enabler units are invited to participate and improve the training event for all parties.

COL Van described his relationship with his partner BCT Commander from 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (1CD) and his partner brigade commander from 177th Armor Brigade, First Army, as one of mutual trust and support. The 177th Training Brigade is located on Camp Shelby which lends to easy coordination simply due to proximity to the 155th ABCT HQs. The other key factor COL Van highlighted in this unique partnership is the unwavering support from MG Collins, TAG MSNG, and MG Bills, CDR 1CD. COL Van emphasized that these senior leaders embrace partnership as the way to increase readiness for both units, and better integrate the total force. 155th ABCT is fully integrated with 1CD to include aligning tactical Standing Operating Procedures.

A question and answer session followed where several topics were discussed. COL Van explained that the 155th ABCT planned to stabilize leadership positions six months prior to their NTC rotation. Currently there are 553 Soldiers "non-DMOSQ" (not duty military occupational skill qualified) so those young Soldiers will become qualified before the NTC rotation. The conversation shifted to funding for training. COL Van explained that the 155th ABCT was provided 21 days of Annual Training (AT) day funds for each Soldier in the unit to perform the extended training of XCTC during TY 15. Next year for the multi-echelon integrated brigade training (MiBT) during TY 16, the unit expects to be funded for another 21 days of AT. During TY 17 for the NTC rotation, the unit is expected to be funded for 28 days of AT. The MS ARNG leadership is briefing all Soldiers regarding the additional training requirement and providing letters to employers to reduce friction between employers, Servicemembers, and the unit.

When asked if Soldiers have to choose between school and AT, COL Van explained that the State did not get additional funding to send Soldiers to both Professional Military Education (PME) and AT. They are hoping to get additional funding for MiBT and NTC rotation years to allow leaders to do both.

MG (R) Carpenter asked what happens to the partnership agreement when 1CD is deploys next year, who fills in as the partner BCT? COL VanWagener explained that the 1CD Commander will handoff partnership to a sister brigade. 3/1 CD will be at Ft

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Hood for the MiBT next year. Additionally, the goal is to have part of 1CD fight under 155th ABCT during their NTC rotation as its 3rd combined arms battalion.

MG (R) Carpenter asked if the unit or the exercise was under resourced on anything? COL Van pointed out that adequate parts stockage was not projected and on-hand. We need a parts inventory that we can push to the Brigade Support Area. The stockage is not needed year round, but is critical to support major exercises to train as they would operate when deployed, and to maintain a high Operational Readiness (OR) rate. Every day counts during AT, and we need every tank running to maximize training.

Commissioner Lamont asked if the 155th ABCT Soldiers would be interested in a real world assignment, would Soldiers be willing to go? COL Van stated enthusiastically, "Yes." About 25% do not have a combat patch (i.e. have not deployed into combat operations), and the Soldiers without a combat patch want one. Kids in the 1980s and 90s joined the National Guard for college funds. The young Soldiers joining now are joining to serve. They expect to go on deployments.

COL Van pointed out that the time to setup, run, and tear down all the Army Battle Command Systems (ABCS) takes away training time. His brigade addressed this issue by combining unit assemblies to practice connecting the systems and using the systems once set up. His Soldiers liked this method because it allows for higher level achievement during the training period.

Ms. Emerson asked if his Soldiers were as enthusiastic about supporting the State during disasters. COL Van affirmed that they are. Governor Bryant talked about the human relationship with other Mississippians and their Guardsmen and women. Local officials don't want the Soldiers to leave once they arrive.

MG (R) Carpenter asked about the ARNG interoperability with first responders. COL Van explained that the ARNG conducts exercises together with civilian first responders every year. They are familiar with each other and contact begins prior to a weather event taking place. They are connected via satellite and generators run communication equipment, so there is a functioning network even when all the local power is knocked out. Soldiers call home via satellite during training events to test this capability to make and maintain the satellite network. The mission of a combat brigade is not mutually exclusive to support civilian authorities. The primary training focus is on the wartime missions, but the unit is able to do disaster relief and respond to civil unrest when called upon to do so.

Commissioner Lamont wrapped up the session by thanking everyone for all you are doing for the citizens of our country. The session ended at 1240hrs and the group remained in the briefing tent for box lunches.

XCTC, 3/1st CD, and 177th AR/1st Army

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The next session began at 1308hrs with the XCTC Exercise Director, Mr. Horton, 3rd Bde Cdr/1st CD, and 177th AR Bde Cdr/1st Army. All were present for the FACA briefing earlier. This was an informal question and answer session with no formal briefing. Commissioner Lamont started the session off by explaining the history behind the formation of the commission and that the commission needs to figure out how to maximize what the Army can do within a limited budget.

COL VanWagener discussed his recent experience working with 36th ID for their War-Fighter Exercise (WFX). He explained that, in general, the AC does not have a good understanding and appreciation for the RC and that AC/RC units are interoperable. Some cultural differences have been broken down over past 13 years to the point that we get along very well at our level. The concern is that those gains may be lost if the gains are not solidified, and not codified in policy. As 155th ABCT prepares for their NTC rotation, 3/1 CD expects to fill one of the CABs to be attached to the 155th.

Commissioner Lamont expressed a need to have Soldiers move between components easier as a way to better integrate the Total Army. The process needs to be easier and it absolutely needs to be career enhancing similar to joint assignments. This movement across components also must work in both directions (AC to RC and RC to AC). He asked the panel what level they thought multi-component units (MCUs) might work. The group expressed positive support for leader swaps. They knew round-out brigades³ had been tried in the past, but were unsure why they were not successful. MCUs may not work at the same level for different types of units (for example, engineer units may work fine at the company level, whereas BCTs may need to remain intact at the brigade level.)

MG (R) Carpenter mentioned III Corps felt it should validate all armor units. What do you think? COL VanWagener said that he would not want to validate the 155th ABCT as they are peers. 177th AR, 1A provides additional personnel to observe platoons to assist the 155th Cdr and Bn Cdrs with assessments, but the Cdrs validate their own units 2 levels down. We have a 3-part connection between 1st Army, the RC unit, and their AC partner unit. This is a better method for validation.

MG (R) Carpenter stated that NTC is adding 3-4 days to each rotation to make up for lower training levels. Would XCTC help prepare AC units? COL Van Wagener stated that he would like his BCT to participate in an XCTC prior to their NTC rotation because they can't replicate all the assets that this venue brings together in terms of enabler units, training aids and devices, force-on-force events, digital After Action Reviews, and Live Fire Exercises. Even the opposing force (OPFOR) has integrated mission training plans with integrated graphics nested within the friendly or blue forces (BLUFOR) plan. This has proven to be a great way for everybody to get quality training. In order to build

³ From 1973 to 1996, the US Army employed various forms of "round out" and "round up" units to use separate Reserve Component brigades to round out Regular Army Divisions manned at two thirds strength.

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the necessary relationships and stack all the enabler units together to build a coherent plan, the coordination needs to start at least a year out.

Commissioner Lamont asked if these Cdrs are seeing any change to the AC deployment rates. COL Robins explained that he had just come from an assignment as the 101st ABN DIV G3 and he did not see a decrease in OPTEMPO on the horizon. Commissioner Lamont mentioned that he had met with a unit in Germany that was placed on 179-day non-deployment, Temporary Duty (TDY) orders. Unit morale was good, but this seems to dance around how many Soldiers we are using. COL Robins explained that the financial benefits are not as good for the Soldiers using 179-day orders versus deployed status. There is also adjustment for families with these 179-day and 9-month TDY cycles. The real downfall of using TDY versus deployment is this keeps the OPTEMPO for the Soldiers up, but it doesn't show up as a deployment. Conceivably, a Soldier could return from this 179-day TDY assignment and be deployed to a named operation. He or she would never show up as breaking dwell. This will have a detrimental effect to families.

Ms. Emerson asked Mr. Horton how long does it take to setup and take down the XCTC? He responded that two weeks for set up and two weeks for tear down is common. They have sufficient MILES (multiple integrated laser system) equipment to instrument up to 10,000 Soldiers in an exercise at a given time. This exchange concluded at 1400hrs and a short break followed.

154th RTI Cdr, Camp Shelby Installation Cdr, State Aviation Safety Officer

This discussion began at 1411hrs with Commissioner Lamont reminding the group of the Commission's purpose and ADFO reminding everyone of the FACA rules.

COL Powell, the State Aviation Safety Officer, began by explain that RC Aviation trains to the same standards and required flight hours as the AC. If Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) goes through as the Army plans, it will remove a great deal of experience and ability from the force.

Commissioner Lamont asked what will happen to Apache pilots? COL Powell stated that they hadn't worked to get definitive numbers yet, but some pilots may get out or retire choosing not to re-train on a different airframe. Others may be satisfied to stay.

MG (R) Carpenter asked what MOB:Dwell rate can ARNG Aviation sustain? COL Powell offered that 1:3 is sustainable saying that ARNG Aviation never followed ARFORGEN other than as a loose guide. The dwell rates were less than 1:3 years, yet the ARNG never turned down or failed to meet a sourcing. He stated that AC units also pulled pilots from the ARNG to man AC units for deployment. ARNG Apache pilots are very experienced and competent as demonstrated by Special Operations Forces requesting ARNG Apache pilots by unit name, in part due to ARNG keeping senior CWO 4 and CWO 5 pilots at the company level. If ARI is allowed, there will be no CABs

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in the ARNG. ARNG mechanics also stay in place far longer and gain valuable experience that will be hard to replace. MG (R) Carpenter asked for information on the operational readiness rate for Apache aircraft in Mississippi and LTC Haynie committed to providing that information after the site visit.

The conversation then shifted to the Regional Training Institute (RTI) activities when MG (R) Carpenter asked (1) how many AC Soldiers train at the Camp Shelby RTI, and (2) are you filling courses to capacity? COL Amos Parker responded that they do train some AC, but not nearly as many as they could. The RTI teaches Armor, Infantry, Artillery, and NCOEs courses. AC Soldiers can return to their units faster because the RC course works through the weekends while providing the same training since all are TRADOC approved course of instruction. In order to educate AC leaders about what is available and where it is available, MS ARNG RTI conducts instructor exchanges at the AC school houses. This practice is expected to build trust among instructors so they know the MS ARNG NCOs are professional and competent. The one area that drastically deviates from the overwhelming RC throughput is in Unmanned Aerial Systems training where the AC/RC split for courses is 50/50.

COL Michel explained that Camp Shelby is the largest ARNG installation with 134,000 acres, and offers great flexibility to units coming there to train. Camp Shelby will host 135,000 Soldiers this year. About half of the people are ARNG and the rest are Army, USMC, USCG, AF, SOF, and foreign military. Camp Shelby has the largest Maneuver Area Training and Equipment Site (MATES) facility in the Army with the largest armor equipment set as both Tennessee and Mississippi maintain equipment there.

Force protection is the biggest concern on Shelby that needs to be addressed. NGB needs to send the money in the correct funding areas. COL Michel stated that he is very concerned about the installation budget being reduced too low to maintain facilities as Camp Shelby moves further away from operating as a mobilization site. Camp Shelby operates with only 200 full time employees. Their road graders crews work every day to keep training areas open and maintain the road network. The discussion ended at 1436hrs.

NCFA personnel and MS ARNG contingent then moved by ground to the range complex to observe the 155th ABCT conduct Tank Table 12 combined arms live fire exercise (LFX) integrating mortars, artillery, dismounted infantry, tanks, and Apaches. The LFX concluded at 1540hrs.

NCFA personnel moved by ground to the Aux Army Airfield for departure back to Andrews AFB at 1600hrs.